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**THE LITTLE FLOWER
OF CARMEL**

THE LITTLE FLOWER OF CARMEL

BY

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF "THE HIGH ROMANCE"

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J. M. J. T.

To

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns

of

*The Monastery of Our Lady and St. Thérèse
Carmel-by-the-Sea*

Diocese of Monterey-Fresno, California

This little book

*Is offered, in gratitude, by its writer, Brother
Michael of the Will of God, Tertiary of the
Order of Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel*

Credidi, propter quod locutus sum:
ego autem humiliatus sum nimis.

THE LITTLE FLOWER OF CARMEL

I.

ONE afternoon, not long ago, I went to a painter's studio to look at a mural decoration to be placed above an altar in one of the great churches of New York. It is part of my business as a journalist to attempt now and then the difficult and usually unsuccessful task of writing about pictures. Therefore, my visit to the studio was in itself a customary experience. But on this occasion it

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turned out to be a strange adventure. Its interest was, in one sense—a sense I shall try later on in this essay to describe—so personal to the adventurer that he may fail to communicate it to others; but he does not really think so: he believes that the high romance which he glimpsed is the same which all hearts hunger for, and all souls seek. At any rate, his efforts to let others share his adventure is itself an adventure; and, therefore, well worth trying. Life is more happily and beautifully enlivened and illustrated by such events and circumstances as those that I shall relate than the schools of pessimism and the dreary, misnamed realism would have their unfortunate readers suppose. The wonderful things that really are happening all the

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time and everywhere, the marvels and miracles that may be known by all who so desire—these things I, for one, have always searched after, and not without some measure of success.

The studio to which I had been invited was situated on the top floor of a most enormous office building. Under its roof some forty thousand human beings live their workaday hours in offices ranged like the cells of a beehive on immense floors; the area to be computed in acres, rather than square feet. As you enter this building, you come into a gigantic hall, from where, beyond the guarded gates, stretch lines of railway radiating throughout the continent. Hundreds of thousands of travelers surge and pulse backward and forward through these

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gates—day by day, and night by night. Tunnels and passageways go up and down, and to and fro, to subways, hotels, restaurants, shops and stores. All this is flooded with artificial light, ventilated by machinery. It is a city within a city, and mostly under the earth.

The trail to the studio led by devious ways through all this vast complex of modern American life. An elevator whirled the adventurer upward as far as the machine could go; then there was a walk through surprising art galleries, hushed and still above that tumultuous hive of traffic and trade, and up a flight of stairs to another floor roofed with skylight where the studios are. The adventurer—a pilgrim, rather, because he was

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really making a pilgrimage to a shrine—almost got into the wrong place: a common experience to all adventurers and all pilgrims. He nearly entered a studio where a jazz band was playing—drums beating like feverish heartbeats—saxophones droning tones of poisoned honey—while from the walls, strange, enigmatical pictures in all stages of completion looked at the whirling crowd of men and women. The pilgrim found his way (a trifle reluctantly perhaps) past the cavern of Perpsichore and finally came upon what he sought—the shrine.

He cannot really describe what he saw; any more than he can fully express the soul of his story; for the story is above all things that of a great achievement. He saw, then, partly

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finished, partly sketched, the various parts of a monumental decoration which, when finished, will be placed in the church of the Paulist Fathers in New York, above an altar which is to be "dedicated," as the phrase goes, to a saint. There are thousands of altars in churches all over the world thus dedicated to saints. Since the beginning of Christianity, artists, sculptors, painters, mosaic workers, woodcarvers have been decorating them as appropriately as they were able. Their most successful efforts are now among the glories of art, in addition to serving their more practical purposes. Fortunately, there will always be true creators who give the best that is in them to the service of God through beauty; and, happily, their number

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seems to be increasing, for there is abroad in the world a great revival of the Catholic Faith, and art stirs to the promptings of its resurgent inspiration as well as all other forms of human activity. Hence, that there should be such an artist—Augustus Vincent Mack—even under the roof of this vast building in New York, was not in itself so very strange. But it was wholly admirable.

What really was strange was the subject of his work, because its subject was the strangest, and, as I hold, the most wonderful story of our modern age. When completed, the picture will cover the walls of a chapel recess, between thirty and forty feet in height. Above the tabular altar there will be a panel portraying in a splendid, lucid,

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march of color, a glorious pageant. Under the oriflammes of many nations and the banners of religious sodalities, a procession of prelates and priests moves onward carrying the relics of the saint to whom the altar is dedicated. Although the artist has created his own imaginative vision here, this is no imaginary scene. It really happened in a little town in France, to which came representatives of all the nations and peoples of the earth to do honor to this saint. Nor did it happen centuries ago, in the days before Grand Central railroad stations, and electric light, and steam, and radio, and the films, and jazz, and the newspaper press; it happened only a year or two ago. Above the pictured panel there is a lunette in which the central figure

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the saint herself. From her opened hands there falls a shower of roses; they fall in ever-widening circles, spreading as the ripples spread on a stream into which a pebble falls, onward to infinity. On each side there is a bowed and kneeling figure—one a man, the other a woman. These figures are humanity; man and woman: between them, the child through whom they offer up the highest act of which the human soul is capable: which is prayer.

Who is this saint?

It is not the saint of saints, the highest and holiest human soul, the Mother of Christ; it is not one of the Apostles, neither Peter nor Paul nor John; it is not the figure of any doctor or master of theology, or martyr, or bishop or

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Pope; it is none of the mighty one whose names come down across the centuries in a halo of tradition, of veneration, and high honor; who are celebrated in poetry, their names written into the records of civilization whose images are sculptured in marble or bronze, refulgent in mosaics, emblazoned in almost imperishable colors on church or chapel walls. It is none of these. It is one whose name was placed on that roll of honor, the highest possible to achieve, which is called the Calendar of the Saints, on the seventeenth day of May, in the year of Our Lord, 1925, the Holy Year of Jubilee. It is the name of Saint Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower—the greatest woman of modern times—a saint of today.

II.

I KNOW that in calling Therese Martin the greatest woman of modern times, I must seem utterly inexplicable to most people of to-day. If one of our newspapers should engage in one of the favorite stunts of our modern press by conducting a voting contest among its readers in answer to the question, "Who is the greatest woman of modern times?" it is certain that Saint Therese would not be accorded the majority of votes. It is probable indeed that only a few votes would be cast for her. There would be many other names voted for—such names, for example, as Florence

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Nightingale, Madame Curie, Jane Addams, Queen Victoria, Eleanora Duse, Rosa Bonheur, Lady Astor, Mary Pickford, etc.; names of women eminent either for personal genius manifested in works of art or science or human welfare, or else names simply made notorious by publicity and its manifold agencies: the press, the motion picture, the radio. I realize also that even were the general public asked to name not only the one greatest woman but the six or twelve greatest women, the list probably would not bear the name of Therese Martin. Nevertheless, I hold to my thesis: I maintain that Therese Martin is the greatest woman of modern times. I say, also, that she is the most successful woman of our age. I think, more-

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ver, that it is highly probable, actually, that there are more people who believe as I do in this matter than there are people who would vote for any of the women named above—or for any other woman not put down in that tentative list. But these people who are of my mind in this affair are dispersed through all the world, not concentrated anywhere in numbers sufficient to produce majorities in newspaper voting contests—and even if they were they would not enter into such stunts. For they are Catholics, holding that sanctity is greater than any other human quality, and the saint superior to poets, scientists, philanthropists, inventors, artists, soldiers, even millionaires (which last belief must seem their supreme heresy from

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the really dominant creed of modernity).

That tens of millions of Catholics, in all parts of the earth, should heartily and unanimously hold these views, and yet that their views should be so little regarded by, and apparently have such small effect upon, the world and the world's public opinion, and the world's way of life, is, I think, a signal proof of the weak position of Christianity today. For such views are normal in a truly Christian society. If and when Christianity becomes again predominant, these views will again become general, and popular, only questioned by rebels. The saint will once more by common consent be accepted as the greatest man or the greatest woman; sanctity will be

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recognized as the supreme object of human life. There are many signs—I will not say, of the full return of the Christian dominance of society, but certainly, of a stronger, and ever stronger, re-growth and influence and spread of Christianity. Of this fact, the life and death and the life beyond death of Therese Martin is one of the strongest proofs. To the arguing then of my thesis, first, that Therese Martin is the greatest woman of our age, and, second, that she is a proof of the modern revival of Christianity, and, in particular, of Christianity's supreme and permanent form, the Catholic Church, I devote these pages. They will be—for reasons to be given below—not purely abstract in their reasoning, but (to the writer) almost painfully per-

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sonal. And, at best, there will be but a few footnotes or memoranda, pencilled by one of the readers of the real book on this subject—the book written by Therese Martin herself, her spiritual autobiography, the memoirs of the soul of a saint.

III.

I WILL trace, very briefly, the main facts, the events of her life—a task that will take but very little time, and occupy a very small space.

Marie Françoise Therese Martin was born at Alençon, France, January 2, 1873. She would be a woman of only fifty-two were she alive today. She was the youngest of the nine children of Louis Joseph Stanislaus Martin, a moderately well-to-do jeweller, and of Zélie Guérin. The father and mother both attempted to enter religious orders before marriage but failed in those aspirations. Nevertheless, religion remained for them the supreme

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and central thing in life. The Martin family—like thousands of other humble and retired families throughout Christendom, of whom the world and its newspapers hardly ever hear, and seldom heed—exemplified the truth and produced the fruits of the Catholic Faith. It was one of those families which really live and act according to their belief. From these families come by far the greatest number of the priests and nuns who form the main body of the actual workers of the Catholic Church. Some of these families survive all social disasters: wars, revolutions, plagues, floods, famines; and what is more deadly, the false teachings of the misleaders of the human mind and the dying down, here and there now in this place, now in that, of the

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ght of the Faith. They are the thews and muscles, the bone and blood, of the body of the Church Militant. They exist in all nations and races where the Faith has been enkindled. Now one nation is richer than another in such God-serving families, now some other; but always they exist, bringing forth the sons and daughters who take upon themselves the awesome task of priesthood, or the cheerfully willed and deliberate immolation of self in the service of God and man. Against the force of avarice, which is the true seed of war, and of the commercial struggles which lead to war or revolution, they oppose their contentment and their poverty; they answer lust,—that raging and ravaging force which is

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responsible for some of the worst miseries of our race—with virginity; pride—which sets man against man, family against family, nation against nation—with humility; hatred with love; and from the illusions of time they turn to the truth of eternity.

Of Martin's nine children, four died in infancy and five became nuns, four in the Carmelite Order—that special Order set apart through the centuries for the practice of the highest forms of mysticism. Therese, the youngest, made up her mind to enter the convent at the age of fourteen. At first she was rejected because of her extreme youth by the Carmelites, and by the bishop of the diocese. Taken to Rome on a pilgrimage, she dared to throw herself at the feet of Pope Leo XIII

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and beg him to set aside the decisions that barred her way. In this she apparently failed. The greatest of modern Popes, bending forward and looking into the eyes of the little child at his knee, said only—"Well, well, you will enter if it is God's Will." His keen, old eyes followed the little figure thoughtfully as with bowed head he retired. All the same, there is no force that can withstand the human will when set upon an object in accordance with that Will which was invoked by the Pontiff. This little French girl won her fight. At the age of fifteen she left the world and went behind the walls of Carmel. Nine years later she died within those walls, of tuberculosis. At the command of her Superior, she had written the story

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of her spiritual life—a simple, childish autobiography. There was also a sheaf of verses and a handful of letters. None of those supernatural or, at any rate, supernormal, events, which are recorded in the case of so many saints marked the life of Therese Martin. She pursued the ordinary duties and avocations of an obscure Carmelite. Only a few keen, understanding souls saw that everything she did was done so supremely well, so perfectly in its kind, that it was a transformation, in fact, of ordinary duties and events into spiritual realities, and they knew that the rarest of rare events was happening in their midst; the attainment actual and evident, by a human soul of unity with its Maker: the central aim and meaning of religion.

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It was only toward the very end of her life that the small group who realized the mighty thing that was happening began to be increased and rumors spread without the monastery walls. Things were said and written by this young child that were so extraordinary as to compel amazed attention. She who had been the very embodiment of unselfishness, of reticence and humility, now, without hesitation and in tones of pure belief, and of thrilling joy, announced that her real work was beginning. She said that "God would permit her to remain on earth until the end of time." She "would spend her Heaven on earth doing good." She would "let fall a shower of roses." These things were recorded. Then she died. And then her full life began.

IV.

WHEN Pope Pius XI, in the Basilica of Saint Peter's, amidst tens and scores of thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the earth, representing many other millions to whom the name of The Little Flower is most beloved, and to whom she herself is not dead but still lives in the truest sense of the word—when Pope Pius XI declared her a saint, there were those in the crowd who had known her, talked with her, laughed with her, played and prayed with her. There were members of her own family present. It was only twenty-eight years ago that The Little Flower died, at the

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age of twenty-four. For nine years before her death she had lived, what to those who do not understand, would seem most surely a living death—something worse even than death; shut up in the cloister of a monastery, veiled from the mere sight of all save only her sister nuns—within that prison of the body, but gateway of the soul's full liberty, which is a monastery. There, in fullest accord with the spirit of her Carmelite vocation, she spent nine years praying—just praying and doing her full share of the domestic duties of that nunnery. She desired to be unknown to every one of God's creatures." She "thirsted to be forgotten." Yet today she is better known to more people on this earth than probably any other man or

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woman of our time. There are few other instances, in the history of two thousand years, of the Church so quickly and without reserve recognizing and acclaiming the right of one of her children to be placed among her saints. It is probable that never in human history has a man or woman, in life or death, won such strong love and the trust of so many millions of people in so short a time.

It was almost immediately after her death, that the promised "shower of roses" began to fall. Soon, it was a torrent. A few persons outside the cloister who read the writings of Therese Martin, caused their publication. Edition after edition of the book was quickly demanded. It was translated into Italian, German, Spanish, Eng

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ish, Polish, Chinese, Bengalese—into nearly all the languages and dialects of mankind. Letters, by the dozens, by the score, by the hundreds, soon by the thousands and tens of thousands, rained upon the Carmelite Monastery of Lisieux, describing apparitions, visions, dreams of The Little Flower. There came innumerable stories of sudden, marvelous cures of deadly diseases; of the conversions of sinners; of help accorded in literally myriads of cases of sore need of body, mind and soul. Merely to catalogue these letters—in many cases accompanied by the sworn testimony of surgeons, physicians, priests, witnesses of all sorts—required the publication of a special monthly bulletin, the volumes of which make up a huge tome. Congregations, societies,

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clubs and guilds of all kinds, throughout Christendom, placed their work under the patronage of the little nun.

The most learned of theologians, the grave guardians of the Church of Rome itself—where new enthusiasms concerning supposedly holy persons, particularly those to whom are attributed anything of the reputedly “supernatural,” are invariably watched with the utmost caution—examined everything written by or about Therese Martin and then they joined her multitude of lovers. With unprecedented rapidity, with almost incredible universality, the new devotion swept through the Catholic world. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, artist or ditch-digger, prelate or beggar, society woman or servant girl—it did not matter, all alike, are or

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their knees today, in every land under the sun, asking this child to do good for them out of that Heaven which she is spending on earth. The Catholics of Wales placed their Apostolate of the Faith under her protection; the lonely Bishop of Alaska puts his immense diocese and his poor, scattered Indian and Eskimo souls in her charge; the new cathedral of the newest diocese in the United States, Monterey-Fresno, will be built in her honor; regiments and armies in France fought through the great war under her banner, and her grave at Lisieux is covered with swords and medals of warriors revering her influence. To chronicle the list of great works of human charity, education, literature, art, religion, which are inspired in large part by her vital sway

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over minds and hearts and souls, would take a whole row of books.

A wireless despatch from Rome to the *New York Times* announcing that on the night of May seventeenth the dome of St. Peter's would be illuminated by eight thousand huge candles and flaring oil lamps in honor of the canonization of Saint Therese, the French Carmelite nun, was only one of a great number of newspaper articles that called general public attention to that event, and to the mighty influence of Therese Martin's brief and hidden life. As the despatch related, this illumination of the dome of St. Peter's was "one of the most magnificent of the traditions of Rome," and has not been seen in the Eternal City since 1870, when the soldiers of Garibaldi made

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their historic breach in the walls of Rome and the Popes became the self-made "prisoners of the Vatican." Despite the availability of electricity, the ancient system of lighting was employed,—the giant candles and the great oil lamps, which produce an effect of such weird beauty as the flames and smoke waver in the wind.

Remarkable as this single fact is, it is only one of a series of extraordinary events which have signalized the rise to world-wide fame of Therese Martin. It is safe to say that no other of the many and important incidents of the Jubilee Year in Rome attracted anything comparable to the interest attached to the canonization of the Little Flower. If the Vatican authorities showed that they were well aware of the

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unprecedented interest aroused by this event by reviving the ancient and beautiful method of illuminating St. Peter's, this was but one of the things which the authorities of the Church have done or sanctioned to prove that they attach to the story of this Carmelite nun an importance for which the word unique does not seem to be too strong. In connection with this statement it should be remembered that it is usually only after a very lengthy period—in many cases, centuries—that any additions are made to the official list of the men and women honored by the Catholic Church with the title of "Saint." For example, during the same month that witnessed the elevation of Therese, there also was canonized the great Jesuit preacher and organizer, Peter Canisius, the "Apostle

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of Germany," one of the leaders of the Counter Reformation, who died in 1597. Therese, as stated above, died twenty-eight years ago. There are very few instances, indeed, in the two thousand years during which the Calendar of the Saints has been compiled, of the Church officially naming anyone a Saint so soon after death.

Secondly, it is a highly singular circumstance that although a dignitary of the Church has declared that "never in human history has a Saint captured the heart of millions in so short a space," Therese at the time of her death was absolutely unknown except to a mere handful of people, few of whom considered her to be in any way remarkable among her fellow nuns. In her lifetime she accomplished none of the great

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works of charity, education, leadership, or public influence, that ordinarily are achieved by the men and women honored by the Church. A member of a strictly cloistered community of nuns devoted solely to an ordered life of mystical prayer, she did not emulate the public work done by the other Saint Teresa, the Spanish reformer of the Carmelite Order, who founded so many monasteries and convents, constantly travelling and organizing, who wrote books on mysticism and mystical poetry which are among the classics of Spanish literature because of their style and originality, and also are among the classics of world literature because of their value as treatises on the obscure yet important subject of mystical psychology and experience. Entering her convent

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at the age of fifteen and dying when he was twenty-four, Therese was absolutely unknown to the great world outside her cloister, except to a few clergymen and devout people in Lisieux. Yet today the one book she wrote—a brief and very simple autobiography, mostly devoted to her mental and spiritual life, with very little attention given to exterior events—has been translated into practically every human tongue, and is known to millions of readers.

Apart from the more or less evanescent newspaper publicity elicited by her canonization, interest in Therese is far from being confined to her Catholic co-religionists. Such eminent contemporary students of mysticism as Evelyn Underhill, and Arthur Edward Waite,

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have studied her career and written upon it.

“Whether we like it or not,” says Mr. Waite, in his *Lamps of Western Mysticism*, “the lesson which her story conveys is the quality, depth, and extent of the grace which remains in the ascetic path for those who are still called to follow it—few and far between, as we tend to think, but more numerous perhaps and signal than we may care to dream. . . . Her secret from the beginning was the all-secret of love, and this is why I have called her—in the words of Richard Crashaw—a ‘Daughter of desire.’ . . . The graces attributed to her intercession are innumerable. They are conversions, physical healings, escapes from death, accidents averted, even gifts of money. I sup

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Suppose that the cures of the sick will be most important as evidence to those in search of such things; they include cancer, loss of vision, elephantiasis—among others numberless. I do not adjudicate upon the value of any . . . But the beautiful life of the 'little Flower of Jesus' becomes better known by these means. Those which were purely spiritual in their compass are of an order which is familiar in the annals of the Saints, and they are distinct from psychical happenings."

Mr. Waite means, as he makes clear in the context of his essay, that exceedingly remarkable as were the supernatural happenings which have occurred since Therese Martin's death, her highest and truest value to the world—or to that part of the world which is inter-

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ested in the spiritual things—resides in the success which this young nun achieved in the supremely rare and difficult practice of mysticism—the “science of sanctity,” as it has been called, or, more clearly, the “science of love.”

In the Catholic Church the Carmelite Order is one of the few set apart expressly for the cultivation of mystical, or contemplative, religion. To make use of a serviceable expression, the Carmelites might be compared to those “pure scientists” who in laboratories or mathematical libraries devote themselves exclusively to the study and elucidation of the principles of the physical sciences—the inner mysteries of nature’s laws. The Carmelites are experts in prayer. They give themselves

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to its practice in the same, yet perhaps even more perfect and higher, spirit of self-sacrifice as radium or medical research workers give themselves to be the subjects or victims of their experiments. The Carmelite Order is one of the most ancient in the world. Its traditional history goes back to the time of Old Testament characters like Elisha, who was a hermit on Mount Carmel in Palestine. There is today a Carmelite Monastery on the top of that same hill in Palestine, and many of the monasteries of the Order—for both Friars and Nuns—exist in most parts of the world. There are a number of them in the United States. The order was introduced into this country by the first Catholic Bishop of the United States, Carroll, one of whose first official acts

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was to request a Carmelite convent in Belgium, of which, for two centuries before we became a nation, Catholic women from Maryland had been members, to send a group of nuns to America to pray for the infant Church. One of the primary objects of the Carmelites' life of prayer always has been and still is to supplicate heavenly aid for the work of the priesthood. A Carmelite convent is regarded by bishops and priests and by the more earnestly devout among the laity as a sort of spiritual power house, where living dynamos of prayer draw down and communicate the force of "grace" to those for whom they pray.

It is safe to say that the Catholic Church relies more upon the "supernatural" side of its ministry than upon

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the elaborate and time-tested efficiency of its exterior organization. It considers the actual effect of the Mass, for example, much more important than works of education or charity—in the ordinary sense of the word—or any other activity. Thus, in times of persecution or of political trouble, the Church will bow to the storm and drop many of its usual works and customs till the arrival of better and safer days, but the Mass must go on, no matter if it costs the lives of the priests who say it—as has happened so many times in the Church's history. Similarly, when Popes, or Cardinals, or Bishops, or priests, or societies and groups, are launching or conducting their multi-form activities, they turn always to nuns and little children to beg for the

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assistance of their prayers. And among those to whom the active workers of the Church turn most confidently are the Carmelites. These Carmelites have given many saints to the Church—men and women, that is, whose living of their highly specialized kinds of life has been pronounced, after the most painstaking enquiries, to be heroic, and whose attainment of spiritual heroism has been confirmed—so Catholics profess—by miracles wrought by or through their intercession with God, after their death. Such a Carmelite was Therese of Lisieux.

V.

FOR those of us who are of this world, worldly — though we may believe and even strive to act on our belief that this world is impermanent, its values not final, and that there is truly a spiritual world transcending the material one—for us to speak about sanctity and the saints is to plunge into almost insuperable difficulties of understanding, of expression, of definition. It is like trying to analyze and to define poetry, or the soul of music, only it is a task vastly more delicate and difficult even than those, which have been the despair of critics since the beginning of literature.

What is a Saint?

When the soul of Gerontius, in New-

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man's great poem—"that poem," as Father Martindale writes—"in which, as in none other save (dare we say?) the Apocalypse, the walls of time and space flicker and grow thin before the pressure of eternity"—when the soul of Gerontius was borne through the cold deeps of death toward Judgment, he heard one answer given to that question by the demons, who in raucous chorus howled:

What's a saint?
One whose breath
Doth the air taint
Before his death;
A bundle of bones
Which fools adore,
Ha! Ha!
When life is o'er,
Which rattle and stink

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E'en in the flesh.
We cry his pardon!
No flesh hath he;
Ha! Ha!

For it hath died,
'Tis crucified
Day by day,
Afresh, afresh,
Ha! Ha!

That holy clay,
Ha! Ha!
This gains guerdon,
So priestlings prate,
Ha! Ha!

Before the Judge,
And pleads and atones
For spite and grudge,
And bigot mood,
'And envy and hate,
'And greed of blood.

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But even if the demons deride, they know the power of sanctity, even as defeated men may scoff at and curse their conquerors. Their answer to the question is not that which would be given by the generality of men and women today, who because they have no belief in God cannot, of course, even dimly comprehend the idea of sanctity. To such, the saint must and can only seem the waster and the denier, even the enemy of life, the refuser of happiness, the anticipator of death, the supreme victim of illusion. Only by granting that the saints, or those who without achieving sanctity, search after it, at least are consistent idealists, although the ideal itself is a terrible mistake, can the more noble-minded unbelievers grant them a pitying admiration.

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The answer that many believers give to the same question is very vague. The saint at best seems to them one so set apart from the rest of us that he has really ceased to be human—a false idea for which far too many books about saints must bear the responsibility for encouraging. They do not know the saint as one who has lived a life in which he has been heroic in the ways in which all men and women are deficient, or else merely ordinary, or at best only fitfully active: the ways of the high virtues of human effort: the ways of faith, hope, and love, of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance all exemplified by him in a great and constant measure—to say nothing about the saint as one in whom the ineffable central mystery of religion has been, in greater or less degree,

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accomplished. This ineffable mystery is set before mankind as its goal in that great prayer said by the priest at Mass when he pours into the chalice the water and the wine which are to become the blood of Christ:

O God, who, in creating human nature, didst marvellously ennoble it, and hast still more marvellously renewed it; grant that, by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of his divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord; who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

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The saint is the pioneer of mankind in its great affair of transcending humanity, overcoming the limitations of mortality, and passing through weakness, pain, sorrow, disappointments, and death to strength, health, joy, reality and everlasting life. The saint is our true leader. The humblest and littlest saint is a greater conqueror than Caesar or Alexander or Napoleon; his life means more good to mankind than the researches of all the scientists, the creations of all inventors, the books of all the philosophers, the masterpieces of all the artists. He alone is the true realist. All other ideals when compared with Christianity are mediocre, or partial, or tainted with falsity, and cannot fully satisfy the human soul. The saint is singular among all human he-

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roes in that he alone achieves his ideal, he alone escapes frustration, and, therefore, he alone is safe for other men to follow. This is why every Christian altar since the beginning of Christian worship contains the relic of a saint. This is why the communion of the saints—the interpenetration of all Christian life by prayers to the saints, by reliance upon their beneficial influence, by the inspiration of their lives, by the imitation of their deeds—is of the very essence of religion, and, therefore, of the very marrow of human life because life without religion is no longer life but death.

It is not that the saint may not be as other men and women are, and share their most human emotions, and weaknesses, and errors, and do their works,

and sin, and fail. Were not that the case, how could they help us, or encourage, or understand us, or be our friends, counselors, and leaders? They would not be saints at all, for the saint must be first of all human. It is—I repeat—the fault of far too much of the literature concerning the saints, in its mealy-mouthed, bloodless, nerveless style, its timid if not cowardly avoidance of facts and realities concerning the humanity of the saints, particularly those of them—and they are many—who knew all the weaknesses and the faults and the crimes and the sins of life, that we should think of saints as a class set apart from us and not as the true men and women, only stronger, and truer than most, which really they are.

VI.

AT the outset I stated that what I should try to say in these pages would not—because indeed it could not—be merely abstract, but would (to the writer at least) be almost painfully personal. If I dare to write about a saint, it is as a camp-follower of Napoleon might put down a few diary notes or observations concerning the conqueror, written at a great distance, yet, after all, written by one who knows out of his own observations, and not out of books, or the words of others. These few pages are a partial fulfillment of a promise I made twelve years ago, when the saint of whom I write,

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this Therese Martin—not canonized then, and not nearly so well known to Christians or to the world outside Christendom—most strangely and wonderfully and pityingly befriended me, and led me into Faith, and into the shelter of the Catholic Church, and placed my feet upon the path to life. And he who knows the path of life is no longer a lost and wandering man in a darkened and stormy world. He is still a wayfarer yet to complete his journey; he still may stray and be lost again, but anyhow he knows the road, he is on the road, and only he is to blame if he does not follow in the footsteps of those who go before him and who blaze the trail most surely, and maintain the inns upon the way.

The pen with which I have written

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part of this essay comes from the monastery at Lisieux where Therese Martin lived and died. In its handle is placed a crystal in which there is a picture of the grave in which the Little Flower is buried, and another picture of the young nun herself, as she looked when lying dead.

Death, and the grave! Yet this pen which is so heavily weighted—one would think—with suggestions and images of dreadful ideas, is made of white ivory shaped like a feather—like a feather from the wings of a dove—the white bird which symbolizes the Holy Spirit. And this pen of mine, to-day, on the Feast of Pentecost, is light in my fingers, and with it I would write only joyous words. It would not chant a solemn requiem, but rather would it

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sing a canticle of rejoicing. O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy sting?

For Therese Martin, her grave was the gate to a great and marvelous and unending life; her death was in all reality a birth.

Let me be quite simple and frank in this matter. First of all if I write in a personal tone it is because I am not writing this little book as a task or as an ordinary piece of literary hack-work; nor coldly, and from mere study of books and records. I was brought back into the Catholic Church chiefly by Sister Therese's influence after a separation from it of twenty-five years. I consider the gift of Faith as beyond all other things the greatest possession a human being may have. Therefore,

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Therese Martin is for me no stranger, not merely a marvellously interesting modern mystic—not only a very moving writer of one of the world's great spiritual autobiographies—she is my personal friend, my invisible yet not distant sister, who opened for me the door that led from misery to the road to happiness and peace.

And it is because I know that in the strange ways of God's mystical orderings this young nun who in her short life was absolutely unknown to the world, who shrank away from all publicity, all contact with the world, as a dove of the forest would fly from a city street, now desires that her name and her story and the influence of her spirit should be spread throughout the whole wide world, that I write this lit-

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the book, and, putting all literary conventionalities aside, write it as a personal testimony upon the occasion of her canonization by the Church. I am simply acting as one of her publicity agents. We all must perforce do what we can along the ways in which we have been habituated to work and for which we have been trained, so as a journalist I do all I can to spread the news concerning Therese Martin. I have written about her in the pages of our great daily press every time an opportunity was afforded to do so. I have written about her in magazines and pamphlets and prefaces to other people's books, and also I have written a book (*) in which the story of my personal experi-

* The High Romance, The Macmillan Company, New York.

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ence of her vital influence is told at great length.

In other words, I do not write to tell you what I have read in other people's books that Therese Martin since her death has kept her death-bed promise of remaining upon earth in order to help the living in a supernatural manner nor that other people say that this is so. I write because I myself know that Therese Martin is alive, and is near us beyond the veil that we call death.

But please remember that I write in vain if what I write does not make you turn to Therese Martin's own book, and to Therese Martin herself.

Above all, pray to her. Prayer is the true universal language. It is the medium of intercourse in the Communion of Saints. English and French and Ger-

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man and Chinese and Greek, and all the tongues of all the races of men when employed in prayer merge into one tongue, common to all hearts and souls, in which all may join, and which angels and powers and principalities employ as well. And in this language Therese will reply to you.

I will, then, now sketch the story of how, and when, and where I was befriended by a saint, and came to know the potency of prayer.

VII.

AS I begin my task, I have before me a telegram signed, "Mother Augustine." It is from the Prioress of a monastery of the Discalced (Barefoot) nuns of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in Santa Clara, California. It tells me that a new monastery of the Order is to be established at Carmel-by-the-Sea, in Monterey County, California, which was given its name by the Carmelite friars who landed there as chaplains of Vizcaino's expedition in 1602, more than three centuries ago. It was one of these Carmelite Friars who recorded the events of that great voyage out of Mexico into the northern seas. For one hundred

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and seventy years after the Spaniards touched at Monterey, saying Mass under an oak tree on the shore, California lay unvisited by white men. Then came Captain Portola, in 1770-1, and with him, Junipero Serra, of the Franciscans. Under the same oak tree where the Carmelites said Mass in 1602, the Franciscans said Mass, and Portola, sword in hand, reclaimed the country for the King of Spain. Later Friar Serra built the mission of Carmelo, dedicated to San Carlos de Borromeo. It was his favorite among all the missions. There he delighted to dwell in those brief periods when he was not tramping, lame leg and all, to Mexico City, or to one or another of the many missions planted by him and his fellow friars from San

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Diego in the south to San Francisco in the north, seven hundred miles apart—so that today, as Charles Warren Stoddard said, the very railroad time table of California reads like a Litany of the Saints. And there Serra died when his time came. His body is buried in the sanctuary of the old mission church. The church itself and all the other adobe or stone buildings fell into owl-haunted, desecrated ruins when the iniquitous Mexican government of the 1830 revolution destroyed the mission system, drove out the Franciscans, and robbed the Indians, whom the Friars had protected and cherished for so long, of their lands, and herds, and flocks, and finally of their lives. But the mission church rose again. Serra re-emerged out of total forgetfulness into

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remembrance, reverence, and honor. And now the Carmelites return to the Carmel discovered by the Carmelite friars three hundred years ago.

There is the consolation of the Faith! Where it once has been planted, its seeds never altogether die. Its followers and its works may be destroyed by fire and sword. Its very memory may locally perish. But time cannot conquer eternal things. A day comes when again there appears the working out in human terms of the Spirit, wherever the Spirit has once been made manifest. The sacraments return. The Cross is seen once more. The Mass comes back. The Faith is that fire which Christ came to cast upon the earth, and none can quench it.

In thus returning, these Carmelites

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return to their own. Vizcaino's expedition, which led to the discovery of Monterey, and the naming of Carmel, a few miles south of that tremendous and noble bay, was sealed with the stamp of Carmel. It was placed under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her title of, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Her statue was on an altar on the deck of one of the vessels. The name of Carmel was bestowed upon the place that now bears it, as a pious homage to the Protectress of the adventure. But there is another explanation, given me by Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, sometime Persian minister to the United States, who was living in Carmel-by-the-Sea when I also lived there years ago. Mirza Khan was a Bahist. He had been secretary to Abdul Baha,

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the head of that mystical religion of Persia so bitterly persecuted by the Mohammedans, during the latter's exile on Mount Carmel in Palestine—the sacred hill where the hermits of ancient Israel dwelt from whom the Carmelite Order of Catholic mystics traditionally trace their spiritual lineage. Mirza Khan told me that there was a close resemblance between the topography of Carmel in Palestine and Carmel in California. Both places have their central hill, bays that lay on the ocean and two rivers emptying into the sea, in almost identical positions. These facts suggest the probability that the Carmelite friars of Vizcaino's expedition were familiar with the Carmel in Palestine, where for centuries there has been a

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monastery of their order, and that they gave the California Carmel its name because of its striking similarity to the holy hill of the east. I for one gladly believe that this was the fact.

What vistas of adventure, what memories of high romance, what great pages of history are re-opened by this telegram from the Carmelite Prioress. The story it invokes did not begin in 1602, with the coming of Vizcaino out of Mexico. Back of that event lies the glorious ambience of the whole marvelous history of Spain in America, starred with the names of Columbus, Magellan, Cortez, Pizarro, Balboa, Ponce de Leon, Las Casas, and many more. But back even of all that lies the story of Carmel, the spiritual Carmel. By tradition if not by documented record,

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the Carmelites are the oldest of all the orders of the Catholic Church, for it is from the Jewish hermits of the Old Testament who lived and prayed on Mount Carmel in Palestine that the Carmelite Order derives not merely its name but its practice of solitude, seclusion, silence, prayer and mystical self-immolation. And, thus, linking with the spiritual life of ancient Israel, the Carmelites continue the age-old effort of humanity to search after and to unite itself with the Divine. Carmel is, therefore, a name which only needs to be studied and contemplated to yield up the entire range of mankind's supreme interest, its real business, which is, Religion.

But there were for me, in that telegram, memories, and an interest, highly

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personal as well as general, and that is why I am writing now. Not for my pen the chronicling of the greater story it invokes. Yet I may hope to add, as it were, a footnote to that story.

For it was in Carmel-by-the-Sea that I first heard about the Carmelites, and about their work, their history, their life, and their influence. There I came within the benediction of that influence, to remain within it, let me hope, forever. I have a little cross made from the wood of the oak tree under which the Carmelite friars said that first Mass three hundred years ago and more, and it was on a hillside path among the woods on the hill of Carmel that I first heard about the Carmelite nun whose name is at the head of this essay. Let me now attempt to relate, in an entirely

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personal fashion, the strange, most wonderful story of that Carmelite nun, as it seems to one whose story has become a part of that story, even as that far, far greater story of her's, is in its turn a footnote to the infinitely greater story of mankind's search after God.

VIII.

IN 1913, I had come to California for the second time. My first visit had ended amid the flames of San Francisco, in the great earthquake of 1906. In Carmel there was living a group of writers and painters, musicians and dramatists, seeking to work out their artistic destinies away from the commercialism and the crushing crowds of the cities. I joined them, and in a little hut amid pine trees I too sought to express myself and to give form and substance to those dream-shapes which, as Rossetti somewhere says, come eddying forth when a man shuts himself in with his soul. Across a canyon that ran a few yards away from

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my hut was the cottage of George Sterling, the poet. Mary Austin, in a house near the sea, brooded over her memories of the deserts of the southwest country. James Hopper, novelist and short story writer, not far away struggled with the stubborn problems of his style. Pens, pencils, typewriters, paint brushes, were being employed more or less busily, with results of varying merit, in a score of other huts or bungalows. An open air theatre gave the dramatists and player folk an opportunity to experiment. In a word, on the slopes of this Mount Carmel of the western world, art and beauty were served where in olden time the Franciscan friars devoted their lives to the quest of God, and where the Carmelites had found, in the depths of the unknown, at the

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farthest end of the earth, the replica of their spiritual home—the hill of the hermits, the mount of vision, the fountain of the mystical life, Carmel.

It is not for me to attempt to look within the souls of my fellow writers and artists of Carmel. It would be a futile task even were I dowered with profound insight and with a corresponding ability of expression. “My secret to myself,” is a motto of universal application. Every soul is a mystery to all others. Only God can share the inner knowledge of the life of each individual among his children. But I think I may say that each and every one of the searchers after beauty, in that colony of artists, was like me in one respect, namely, that all were also searchers after truth. The artists of today—

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the dreamers, the seekers, the creators—even those many among them who seem utterly to fail in all their endeavors, have at least this in common—that they are not content with the mammon-worship of our distracted age: they do not bow down and worship the idols of mechanism, commercialism, profiteering, quantity-production, mob-rule, vulgarity, mediocrity, which are set up in the market places of nearly all the world. Even their Greenwich Villages, and their eccentricities, and downright tom-fooleries, have in them something at least of the spirit of a most necessary and healthy rebellion against the crushing, dreary, drab, deadening spirit of materialism which has spread its flabby pestilence throughout so vast a part of humanity.

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The artists believe with Villiers de l'Isle Adam that if what they see generally accepted as normal human life today indeed be life, then they will leave it to servants and dullards, they themselves will refuse to live such a life, and will seek the good life anywhere else but along such muddy, stupid, monstrous paths. Hence they so often become not merely rebels against society, but also against those very fundamental laws of society the perversion or ignoring of which have brought the world to its wretched plight.

You may say, at this point, "But how ridiculous it is for these writers and painters, dramatists, and journalists, sociologists and agitators, to take themselves, and the problems of society so seriously. They cannot—for they do

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not—solve these problems. They are mere disturbers, dangerous when they are not absurd, because of the evil effect of their doctrines and their actions upon others.” This criticism is not without some justice, but it should be remembered that there is at the bottom of the wild and at times almost senseless revolt of the artists and social agitators of today something splendidly and permanently true, and in a most real sense Christian, because it is the principle of human brotherhood, the sentiment of human solidarity, of personal responsibility for others. They do not, at all events, share the heresy of Cain and refuse to be their brothers’ keepers. They suffer because others suffer, and they are sharers and bearers of the pain and sorrow of the world. In this they are

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more Christian than far too many who profess Christianity. Christians who shut themselves up within the closed circle of their faith, their hope, and their charity, ignoring the world without, seeking only their personal safety and comfort, and stubbornly and ignorantly resenting without understanding the efforts of social reformers and artists to bring about more tolerable conditions of life for the poor and the toilers of the world, have surely lost something vital and most necessary of what Jesus Christ came among men to teach. Such lame, halt, and half-blind Christians are responsible in a large measure for the odium and the reproaches levelled against the Church, and for the terrible defection from the Faith, and the dismemberment of Christendom, which

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has been, and still remains, the supreme disaster of humanity. Surely it is wrong wholly to condemn even the most extreme and palpably wrong-headed artists and social revolutionaries. What is required is to give their revolt a solid foundation, and to lead it aright. And that solid foundation is true Christianity; the safe leadership can only be the Catholic Church.

But I was far away from thinking so, twelve years ago. Then, I had reached an impasse. I had lost faith in all the formulæ of materialistic socialism, or of intellectual anarchy, between which extreme ideals of non-Christian social philosophy I had oscillated for years, in which circumstance I was a true child of the time-spirit. I had come to see one

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truth, at least, namely, that underlying every other problem of life was the supreme problem of religion. All material things issue into spiritual causes. And all spiritual causes must issue from One ultimate cause. The conception of the universe which stopped short of an explanation by adopting a theory of its accidental, fortuitous origin—life as a by-product of chemical or electrical energies—intelligence itself merely a refinement of these energies—in short, materialism—was utterly unacceptable. The conception of the universe which would explain it by the theory that matter itself from its grossest to its most delicate manifestation was itself divine—pantheism—was no less impossible of acceptance. No—there was only one conception which could explain the uni-

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verse for me, even if it could not be wholly understood. God! There must be—there was—a God, the Supreme Creator, the ultimate and ineffable first cause of all things in which there is life.

So far, could I go. But that was not far enough. This was my thought, but it was not my belief. My mind said Yes to God, but my heart did not know Him, and my soul was dark and cold. Where was He? How was He to be found? To think that He was and yet that I knew Him not, nor how to find Him, was torture and not consolation. God is not only the conclusion of a syllogism. He is not simply the sum of mathematical formulæ. Is poetry the black marks made by ink on paper? Are the notes jotted on a stave the

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music itself? Even my reason, in the very act of affirming God, because of my mind's necessity to rest its operations on something final, absolute, eternal, immutable, cried out in pain and loneliness unquenchable: "Yes, O God, Thou art, but Thou art not mine. I know that Thou art, but I do not know Thee, and unless I know Thee I know nothing save loss, and frustration, and thirst unsatisfied and hunger that ever starves me!"

Therefore, I went forth to search after God. I have elsewhere related the long story of that quest. I cannot repeat it within the limits of this sketch. It is enough to say that every path I adventured upon had one thing in common, namely, that each was an attempted exploration of the invisible, the

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spiritual world. Deeply and strongly as I believe that true religion has of its very nature a great social meaning, an application to all the problems and the tasks of mortal men living in a mortal world, I still more strongly believe that the supernatural meaning and mission of religion is superior to its natural operations, and that if this fact be forgotten or ignored, religion's social, natural value will be lost, and nothing finally good can come of it. It is not pessimism, not contempt or despair of this world and its life to declare, as Catholic Christianity declares and must ever declare, that it is a passing world, and we but passers through it. On the contrary, it is optimism of the truest kind, it is love of real life, it is the truth that the Church thus proclaims, and

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teaches, and exemplifies through its saints. The highest ideal held by social reformers and prophets who refuse the supernatural ideal of Catholic Christianity is but the hoped for (yet impossible) achievement, in an ever-receding future, of a world-state from which all sickness, and poverty, and war, and other temporal ills, have been eliminated, all for the benefit of the unborn generations, who themselves must in turn vanish through the jaws of the inevitable grave, leaving the world to their children, and so on, not in *saecula saeculorum*, but until the cooling of the sun closes the drama in a shroud of ice, or a collision with some other atom of matter wandering in space ends humanity and its dream of an earthly paradise in a

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winding sheet of flame. With all due respect to the dreamers of such a dream, a Catholic can only think it very mediocre; not nearly good enough, not a desirable dream, still less a true vision of real life—and one taking no account of the stake in this world held by the myriads of souls living and dying in it before the hypothetical arrival of the theoretical paradise. When he is present at a funeral Mass—perhaps at that time more than any other, when the candles are burning beside the coffin of a corpse, the Catholic hears the voice of his Church uttering words concerning a life compared to which the fullest possible measure of merely natural life is not comparable—

It is truly meet and just, right and

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availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, through Christ our Lord. In whom the hope of a blessed resurrection hath shone upon us: that those whom the certainty of dying afflicteth, the promise of future immortality may console. For unto thy faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not taken away, and the abode of this earthly sojourn being dissolved, an eternal dwelling is prepared in heaven.

And in that same Mass of the Dead, and in every Mass, everywhere throughout the earth, for nearly two thousand years, has been said, and to day is being said, and tomorrow will be

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said, and so on unto the end of time itself, those other words in which indeed the good life, the real, the true life, the life that alone is strong and forceful and full enough to satisfy the eternal desires of our immortal souls is expressed for us—namely, at that wonderful moment when wine and water are poured into the chalice, and that marvellous prayer in which the high spirit of Christian mysticism, the fullest meaning of Religion, is put into words as clearly as that ineffable meaning may be defined—

O God, who in creating human nature, didst marvellously ennoble it, and hast still more marvellously renewed it; grant that, by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divinity who

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vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord: who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost one God, world without end. Amen

But on none of the paths I followed did I find anything but confusion, frustration, and illusions, till came a day when a friend told me about the autobiography of Therese Martin. It was while walking through the odorous pine woods on the slope of a hillside in Carmel that I held that brief yet most momentous conversation. I had been speaking of the books I had been reading concerning mystics and mysticism and my friend said: "But all your reading deals with the past. Why not read the life of a modern mystic? Then you would learn that the quest of the inner

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most meaning of religion is being pursued, and successfully attained, in the midst of this machine age as in old times of romance. Read the life of Therese Martin, the Little Flower." Following that conversation, I did read the book, and soon afterwards I rang the bell at the doorway of a Carmelite monastery in San Francisco, and being admitted, talked with its Prioress, unseen by me behind the veiled grating, a voice from another world—from the world I was searching after! A little later, on the Feast of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Carmel, in the little chapel of the Carmelites, I was received back into the Catholic Church, the fold of the Faith, out of which I had wandered twenty years before.

IX.

AMONG the great multitude gathered out of all lands and nations and races that knelt under the mighty dome of Angelo in St. Peter's at Rome when Therese Martin was canonized as a Saint—where “the hard-handed peasant rubbed elbows with the princes of the Church in their royal scarlet, and the man of affairs knelt between the poilu and the doughboy . . . knelt in humble petition the Bishop of the youngest diocese in America possessing a resident Bishop, and he prayed the youngest saint of the Church, in the name of his priests and people, to become the Patroness of Monterey-Fresno.”

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I am quoting (with a few changes in tense) words written by the Rev. John J. Crowley, the Chancellor of the diocese of Monterey-Fresno, which diocese was recently formed out of a portion of the vast diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles, and published in the official journal of the latter diocese, the "Los Angeles Tidings." What follows in quotation marks is from the same source.

"And as the reading of the Brief of His Holiness declaring the Little Flower officially canonized was ended, a tremulous voice intoned the glorious 'Te Deum laudamus,' taken up by sixty thousand voices vibrant with joy, and the great bells of Saint Peter's pealed forth the glad tidings to the waiting world that God had exalted His handmaid, Bishop MacGinley heard the

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echo of another 'Te Deum,' intoned thirty-seven years before in the chapel of the Carmel at Lisieux. For on the day of her entry into Carmel, the Little Flower tells us, the Bishop of Bayeux, through an error, since this hymn should be sung only at professions, began the 'Te Deum,' and once begun it was continued to the end. 'Was it not right,' she adds, 'that this feast should be complete, since in it all other joyful days were reunited?' And over the seas and mountains, ringing clear through the years the Bishop caught the strains of yet another 'Te Deum,' sung on the shore of Monterey Bay in 1770 by his saintly predecessor, Friar Junipero Serra, on the occasion of the re-discovery of that long-lost port. And did not the Bishop hear another

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‘Te Deum,’ fainter still, from sacred Monterey, from beneath the very tree where Serra sang Mass one hundred and sixty-eight years afterwards, the song of joy from the lips of the priest who said the first Mass ever celebrated in California, a Carmelite, Juan de la Ascension? ‘And once began,’ the Bishop might well repeat, ‘it was continued to the end.’ For the last link of the chain whose forging was begun that day in Monterey in 1602 by that spiritual brother of Little Therese—he who first looked upon the ‘most beautiful spot in all God’s green world,’ and called it Carmel—was fashioned on the seventeenth day of May, 1925, in Rome, and Monterey-Fresno became the garden of the Little Flower forevermore.

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“Indeed, there is more than an accidental fitness in the choosing of Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus as patroness of the new diocese of Monterey-Fresno.

“Five or six miles distant over the pine-clad hill from Monterey lies, ‘the cradle of religion in California,’ beautiful Carmel, clasped so tenderly within the enfolding hills, the bright river dancing down to the little bay, the sun kissing it with a tireless and never faithless kiss, love-blessed and holy Carmel, the Valley of Junipero Serra’s heart. Who can find fault if we ask the ‘fairest flower of Carmel’ to take our Carmel under her care?

“There is a book called ‘The High Romance,’ the autobiography of one who drifted far from the Catholic faith

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of his boyhood, and who, after a perilous voyage past many a Lorelei and Scylla and Charybdis is led safe into the harbor once more by the Little Flower. It was while walking with a friend through the odorous pine woods of Carmel that Michael Williams, its author, first heard of the Little Flower.

“Michael Williams little dreamed that he was assisting to dedicate this diocese to his heavenly benefactor when he penned the story of the ‘rose’ she let fall upon him in the woods of Carmel. For he has shown that she approved of the choice that would be made of her as our Patroness and that she will continue to shower roses along the trail first travelled by that son of Carmel in 1602.

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“Within the year, if Saint Therese pauses not in the true ‘shower of roses’ which she has already sent to this diocese, a Carmelite monastery will rise at Carmel, in the shadow of the tomb of the saintly Serra. There, more than three hundred years since Juan de la Ascension looked down upon that ‘sapphire sea and turquoise sky’ and called it Carmelo, the fires of prayer will be lighted on ‘the Virgin’s mystic hill.’ Her sister Carmelites, the same who prayed for Michael Williams, will soon follow his footsteps down the trail of the Padres to become themselves the second ‘rose’ that has fallen at Carmel.”

X.

THIS is why the telegram from the Carmelite Prioress to which I refer above awakened in me such keen emotions, and trains of thought I cannot adequately express. For if it be indeed the truth that the book I wrote in a hut on a hillside among the pines of Carmel played a part in bringing the Carmelites back to their sacred mountain of our western world, there to engage in the greatest and highest act save one only, and that the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass—how is it possible for me to tell the wonder of my soul?

Credidi, propter quod locutus sum:
ego autem humiliatus sum nimis.

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But I can at least express the conviction of my mind. I return to my opening statement, namely that Saint Therese is the world's greatest proof today of the resurgent force of the Catholic Christian Faith; that she is the world's greatest modern woman, because she is a Saint.

In an age like this, when from the minds of so many millions of pitiable persons, who in their blindness follow leaders who themselves are blind, nearly all belief in the supernatural has faded or gone out—at a time also when many other millions still cling to some fragment of faith in spiritual realities, but seek them to their own damage in the dangerous, darkened, blind alleys and untracked deserts of false mysticism and occultism—at such a time, the

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emergence of the Little Flower, this child who lived and died obscurely in a little provincial French town, hidden away in one of the cells of a community of mystics, into a place of such unparalleled prominence and power in the world of today is far more than merely one of the strangest and most wonderful of human stories: it is an event that marks the turning point of an epoch. It concurs with, and adds to, the significance and strength of many circumstances and events which together prove that the Catholic faith is today resurgent throughout the world with a forcefulness greater than at any time since the Apostolic Age, or the high tide of the mediæval period. In those Apostolic times, living traditions still remembered the Child of Bethlehem; in those

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middle ages, when faith ruled the world, the Children's Crusade was but one of many things indicating Christian belief in, and respect for, the power of childhood; in our own times, when to oppose the materialism of the age the Church found no stronger weapon than the prayers of little children, once more a child, who did not do the works of Martha but sat like Mary at the feet of Christ, or, rather, like the child she was, nestled within His arms, is placed among the leaders and teachers of mankind.

Measured merely by the standard of material achievements, by the tokens of her personal power to get things done in this human, work-a-day world of ours, then, Therese Martin, I confidently repeat, is indubitably one of the

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greatest persons who has appeared for centuries.

She is an influence before whose mighty sway such names as that of other great modern personalities such as Lenin, or Mussolini, or Wilson or Roosevelt, pale and weaken almost into insignificance. For there is nothing dubious, nor misleading, nor bewildering in her effect upon humanity, and her effect is not transient, but permanent, it does not diminish, but is ever increasing. Unlike so many modern leaders, she did not trust in herself, nor follow her own will, nor express her will in whims and moods or mere emotion. She had a Leader. She identified her will with His. She did not give lip service only to the prayer of prayers: Thy will be done. She *did* God's will. She did it

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every day, and in every act of every day, in little things as well as great.

Let those who, in that gloom of deadly pessimism which it is the work of hell to spread, cry out that materialism has conquered spiritual life—who say that religion is a vain thing—and God a dream—let all such turn from this hasty sketch to the full, detailed story of Therese Martin, and unless their minds have lost all sense of the reality and credibility of testimony, unless they are numb to all impressions of truth, they will learn that here before their very eyes is the triumphant proof of the power of God; here are the works of the Spirit of Faith: the marriage of Heaven and earth: the defeat of death and the negation of the grave: the pathway traced by Christ followed by a child

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JUNIOR NOVITIA

who in turn is leading millions of human beings out of darkness into light, and life, and love.

Not in dim and dusty legends of the past, but here and now, is this great story being told. A saint has been with us in these our own days—a saint who prayed the most wonderful prayer recorded in all the annals of sanctity—the prayer that when her body died her soul should be allowed to remain on earth until time is no more, so that always and everywhere she might do what God Himself did when He became man—that she might go about doing good. She loved and still she loves God, and, next only to God, her neighbors.

And, as I looked at the pictured apotheosis made by the artist in his studio, there amid the blare and iron clan-

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gor of the great city's mechanical heart, I knew that I was only one of many thousands who could truthfully say—

“Concerning the power of this saint with God, I not only believe: I know—full well have I reason to know. The gigantic dynamos that hiss in the cellars beneath me, propelling huge machines, lighting a thousand lamps; the electric engines that draw the trains crashing through the tunnels below; the vast piles of steel and masonry all about me; the headlines flaring on all the news-stands; the banks, the stores, the offices, the crowds hurrying and scurrying on all the bread-and-butter errands of the day—all these are real enough, true enough, in their own way and place—but in the invisible souls of men is the Spirit, the breath of God, and it is more

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mighty than all other forces, more creative of that which is worth creation; and although that Spirit animates the soul of a saint with a force far beyond the reach of the rest of us, the very meaning of the saint is that there is in all our souls the spark of that Spirit which is the life breathed into us by our Maker. The saint shows what may be done to brighten that spark into a flame that will lighten all the world. Therese Martin shows us the way—her ‘little way of self-surrender’ to the will of God. And her way is the way that kingdoms and empires and republics, no less than individuals, must follow before peace can come to the world.”

Sancta Theresa, *ora pro nobis.*



